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How Elders Should Be Made.

There has been warnings published to counteract what was believed to be looseness about the doctrines of the gospel, in the estimation of brethren. There may have been a necessity for that, yet there is a more serious looseness that has been overlooked; a looseness which more seriously concerns the interests of the church than the individual opinions that a few may hold about certain doctrines of the church. We refer to the office of elder in the church and the manner in which they are sometimes filled.

The office of elder is the highest office that exists below the throne of God at this time. Elder and Bishop, in the scriptures are about the same. The office should be filled with the greatest care and with men who are tried and found true to the holy calling.

Paul's ideal church, described in the first epistle to Timothy gives very full directions as to what the qualifications of a bishop or elder shall be. Instead of churches being guided by them, men are ordained as elders without much reflection and very little prayer, and ordained as elders with a hurrah. These things ought not so to be. Men should be proved before they are clothed with priestly powers and ordained as by the authority of God. Through his servant Paul he has named the qualifications and unless they are used in calling a man to that high office, he is holding an office and carrying a dignity that is unscriptural.

The churches should understand that hands should suddenly be laid on no man. This is a scriptural injunction that should be strictly regarded by every one who has a right to ordain. And churches should lend no encouragement to such unscriptural proceedings.

The only safe plan is to give the candidate a trial. The scriptures forbid no man from telling the news of salvation to his fellowmen, and there is no disorder if he baptizes when there is no other to do it who has been set apart to the clerical work of the church.

Churches can so authorize candidates to act, and then see they are worthy before a greater responsibility is put upon them.

There is to be order in the house of God. The work of the

church can not be successfully carried on in any other way. Unless more of a safeguard is placed around that office, it will be robbed of its scriptural dignity in time and the true and innocent are robbed of the power to exert the purifying influences that belong to the office.

Then that class of ready-made elders do not know how to officiate in that high office. They have so little knowledge of church work that the rule of correction is not known scarcely and oftentimes totally unheeded. Under such circumstances if the people happen not to have more prudence and charity than their shepherd, a church feud is sure to follow. The three steps of trial are not respected, as given in Matt. 18, and so the whole case will be an anti scriptural proceeding.

The safeguards the New Testament has thrown around the office of elder should be carefully regarded, that the brother who enters that office in God's house will be competent to discharge the duties belonging to it.

From the scriptures it appears that "elders" officiated instead of an elder. Paul called the "elders" of the church when he had a charge to give. There were two or more in each congregation. In the primitive church they were men of age and the best behavior. The elder is to be a married man, and a man who has children grown; for a man's ability as a ruler over his own household can not be known when he has had no family and children to rule.

For the other qualifications read the third chapter of Timothy, and see what they are.

In the same chapter also are the qualifications of the deacon.

There is no place where an exact compliance with the Word of God is more important than in the appointment of such church officers, and there are few scriptural directions which are so little heeded.

The highest success can never be attained unless there is a return to New Testament methods and application of the rules given them in carrying on the government of the church. There are many brethren in the church who have the apostolic qualifications, but they are seldom searched out. The only qualification now demanded, in most instances, is some ability to preach; and preaching is not even named in the list St. Paul gives. The elder is to be apt in teaching. But teaching is not preaching. The scriptures make a distinction between the words. He is to be able to tell what the scriptures define as the duties of a Christian, and there the special work of his office ends in the direction of communicating a knowledge of God. Therefore preaching not being the special work of the elder, the ability to preach is not to enter into the examination. "Apt to teach" belongs to any good man who has good sense, ability and capacity to rule. Eloquence is the chief ability the preacher needs; but the teacher may have no eloquence at all and be very successful.

Men possessing the qualifications belonging to the eldership are found among farmers and well-to-do and honest business men in the church. They have had experience in ruling families

and in dealing with the practical subjects of life.

If you want to make your church a success, brothers, take all diligence to see that you have only those as elders who fill the requirements of the gospel. Your pastor may be another man, and his business is to strengthen the spirituality of the church and increase its numbers. He should not be harassed with the soul-crushing experiences that many of our pastors are now forced to bear.

The Redeemed.

"Are there few that shall be saved" is an old question. The Bible answers that there are many. The redeemed shall walk in the light of God, and their number shall be as the sands of the sea.

"When we enter the portals of glory,
And the great host of ransomed we see,
As the numberless sand of the sea-shore,
What a wonderful sight that will be."

The destiny of man is not hidden. Its every particular has been revealed by the Spirit, and now the song of the blood-washed is, Eye hath seen, ear hath heard and it hath entered into the heart of man what the Lord hath prepared for those who love him. It is known that joy awaits the faithful soldier of King Jesus' army. The spoils of the battle is the rebirth of the resurrection and immortality. It is known that the Redeemed from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west will be gathered in one glorious family after the travail in the sleep of death is finished in the resurrection.

"When we see all the saved of the ages,
Who from cruel death partings are free
Greeting there with a heavenly greeting,
What a wonderful sight that will be."

God will find thousands of jewels that have escaped the eye of man and he will bring them into his excellent glory and then they shall be known as they were not before. Sorrow, pain and anguish shall be left behind as the mortal soul is born into immortality in the resurrection of the just. Before its perfect image of God shall burst the effulgence of the eternal life and the beauties of the heavenly country. It is then that peace shall flow as a river and the saints shall enter into the reward prepared from the foundation of the world. These are the destiny of the followers of the Lamb. They are the heavenly Canaan and the reward of faithfulness.

"When we stand by the beautiful river
'Neath the shadow of the life-giving tree,
Gazing out over the fair land of promise,
What a wonderful sight that will be."

It will be a meeting of long severed friends, when the mists are cleared away. All is seen in its beauty, but through a glass darkly. The flesh obscures it by the deceptive glory which it holds out as a taunting object within the reach of frail man. But death shall screen it out and leave that which was made pure by the blood of the Lamb. Then we shall know as we are known, and see as we are seen. Glory, honor and adoration shall be shouted to the one who endured so much that happiness eternal might be the unspeakable gift of the redeemed.

"When we look on the form that redeemed us
And his glory and majesty see,
While as king of the saints he is reigning
What a wonderful sight that will be."

GLORY TO GOD!

This is a quiet week among our correspondents. But they are busy at work and will be heard from hereafter.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

There is now a little church war in Philadelphia. The opposition there is trying to root up the Brethren church. But the brethren there are holding fast to the gospel ship and God will bring them through all right.

Peter How, a man of many noble deeds and Christian acts was most brutally murdered last week. The murderer made himself drunk on whiskey licensed by Christians before he undertook his evil work, and used a coupling pin. The victim was seventy years old, and his wife was murdered with him.

Church quarrels are the most cruel agencies of Satan to destroy the progress of the church. They usually commence over some nonsensical question, about which people of good sense and sound minds should scorn to take up and peddle. Satan should be resisted and then he would flee. Satan is resisted by obeying the gospel.

It must have been a wonderful temptation that Christ underwent in the wilderness. He was starved forty days. If there is any place where a man's weaknesses can be reached, it is through the stomach. Adam was overcome by appealing to his stomach. Indeed the stomach plays a very active part in every man's religion. Thousands of professing people have their stomachs full of forbidden fruit—poor diet—and become cross, ill-natured and irreligious. Then others spend all their lives about feeding themselves. Christ fasted forty days. He was taken in the wilderness where there was nothing to eat, and he could not be tempted to do any evil.

Eld. Jerrold writes that he recognizes the church organized in Constantinople, Turkey, to which allusion was made some time ago, as organized on a gospel platform, and ignoring all creeds and professions of faith. He says: "I would most respectfully say to Bro. Copp that we Progressives of Roanoke, Virginia, (myself and others) sat around the table one night in Virginia and read and listened to the report of the church at Constantinople, Turkey, and supposed it to be a real Brethren church in every respect. The fact of their not having formally connected themselves with the Brethren church in the U. S. of A. is nothing here or there."

Hon. Walter T. Mills contributes a noteworthy article to the December Statesman (Chicago) on "Difficulties in Party Re-organization." One paragraph particularly merits attention: "Most men never make but one decision in politics—that is when they join a party, and they frequently do that a generation before they are born. They are Democrats or Republicans the way they are Smiths or Joneses—they were born that way. They were part of a current which they found all flowing one way when they came to 'years of (not) understanding' and they drifted. The steady momentum of great political parties in politics is like a train in its blind, unreasoning and resistless rush along accustomed lines."

A minister once started out to preach a series of sermons on the prevalent sins of the times and of the community in which he lived, devoting one Sabbath evening to each particular sin, and hoping to make a complete finishment of that form of evil in that whole region. He said that two difficulties faced him. One was, that his list grew faster at one end than he could use it up at the other, and that, although he had already preached twenty-nine sermons, he had still sixty-four subjects and the list still growing, that he had no idea that there were so many ways in which a man could be mean and devilish, and that he did not believe his people had either; and it seemed as if he never would be able to complete his series of sermons to a full and well-rounded ending. His other difficulty was, that the people seemed to grow worse instead of better.

Enough hats were burnt in the state of Indiana during the jollifications over the election to send four missionaries out for a year, if their value had been turned into money. How many will denote the value of a hat to the mission work of the church?

The W. C. T. U., of Falls City, Neb., has succeeded in banishing the goulash Police Gazette from that city. That noble band of women is taking hold of many evil things in different places to destroy them.

Bro. Bashor's "Facts" will be continued next week.

A noted millionaire died in Chicago the other day of whom the Tribune said: "He gives nothing for charity; he gives nothing of value even to the Historical Society, although it was in need and he had always shown an interest in it. He leaves nothing to Chicago, where he had lived all his life, and where he had made his money." A few years ago another Illinois millionaire died, who had been honored with some of the highest political offices in the gift of the people, and yet he left not one dollar to testify that he felt that he owed anything to the church or society. It does not much effect such sordid and selfish men (and there are such in the church) to tell them that God will hold them accountable hereafter, but does mean something, even to them, if Christian society holds them accountable here. It is about time that the saints should begin to judge the earth in this matter of covetousness, and that the judgment should begin at the house of the Lord. Nor is this judgment to be visited upon the rich alone out of a feeling of envy, but upon the sordid and selfish everywhere.

Beautiful snow in Ohio this week.

Living Close To God.

If you ask what we gain by living close to God, I would answer that we gain fresh supplies of strength. The strength of yesterday will not suffice for today, any more than yesterday's food will sustain me if I neglect to eat my breakfast this morning. God means that we shall be kept in constant dependence, therefore he meets out "strength equal to the day." The manna must fall fresh every morning. Lord, give us day by day our daily bread. No Christian can live on an old experience or an old promise made to God in years gone by, or on the divine help that was furnished to him in a past emergency. A new conflict requires a new and immediate interposition of the divine aid. The Christians of Laodicea may once have been healthy and happy; they ceased to live near to God, and he "spewed them out of his mouth."

Security depends upon living close to Jesus. The soldier who keeps in the ranks on the march, and behind the ramparts during the assault, is commonly safe; the stragglers are apt to be picked up by the enemy. To this latter class in our churches belong the casualties and the disgraceful desertions which so often shock and shame us. Among this class of backsliders are the ready victims of the tempter—the men who betray pecuniary trusts and the weak-kneed time-server, and those deserters who slip away from God's worship through broken Sabbaths, and all the votaries of self-indulgence, who are mostly found in the haunts of "Vanity Fair." Drifting away from God they fall into the hands of the adversary. Need a Christian ever slip or stumble? Need he ever walk in the dark or lose the roll of his assurance? No; not if he lives close to Christ, so close that the Shepherd's eye is ever on him, and the light of Christ's countenance illumines his path, and the almighty arm is ever within reach. Brother, if you or I ever lose Christ, it is not because he has driven us away, or hidden himself from us; it is because we have been drawn away from him.—The Rev. T. L. Cuyler, in New York Evangelist.

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